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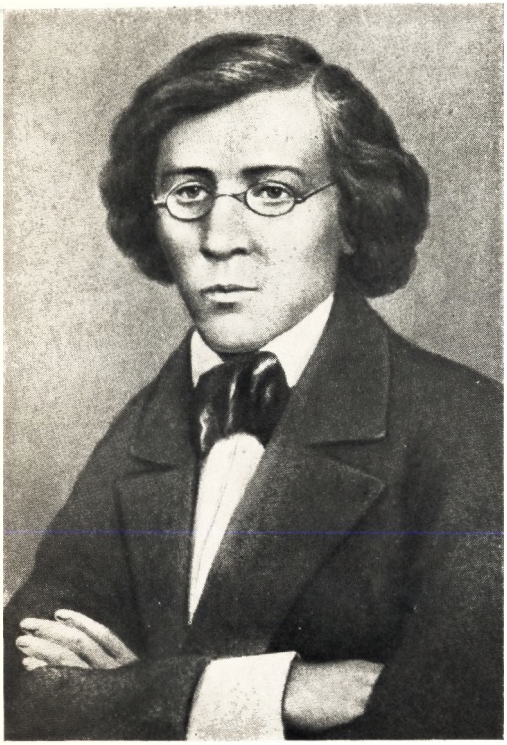
M. GRIGORYAN

N.G. CHERNYSHEVSKY'S WORLD OUTLOOK

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE



NIKOLAI GAVRILOVICH
CHERNYSHEVSKY

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Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky, the great revolutionary democrat and forerunner of Russian Social-Democracy, was an outstanding scientist and a profound and original thinker. His materialist philosophy marked the peak of pre-Marxian philosophy. He stood very high in the estimation of V. I. Lenin, who wrote that he was "the only really great Russian writer who, from the fifties until 1888, was able to keep on the level of an integral philosophical materialism and who spurned the wretched nonsense of the Neo-Kantians, positivists, Machians and other muddle-heads."* Marx carefully studied the works of Chernyshevsky and called him the "great Russian scholar and critic."** J. V. Stalin mentioned him among the most distinguished representatives of the great Russian nation.

* V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Moscow 1952, p. 377.

** K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 19.

Being a revolutionist, Chernyshevsky never studied philosophical problems in the abstract. Science and philisophy served him as weapons in the struggle for revolutionary-democratic changes, in the struggle against tsarism and serfdom. He brought up and elaborated philosophical problems in the light of the concrete needs of revolutionary-democratic practice. His was a new attitude towards philosophy.

Chernyshevsky understood perfectly well that the victory of the people and the ideals of emancipation could be achieved only by revolutionary struggle, by revolutionary political activity. To this political struggle he devoted all his life; it was the starting point of all his theoretical work. For him, theoretical work was one of the forms of the revolutionary struggle, and it always had a definite practical aim.

Thus, Chernyshevsky's philosophy was a philosophy of life, a philosophy of revolutionary action and struggle. It was not expounded in textbooks on the history of philosophy and logic, or taught in universities and academies; it was disseminated through newspaper and magazine articles, and in these essays, reviews and comments on the most diverse questions, which were always of lively and topical interest, Chernyshevsky gave what for his time was a profound scientific explanation of reality.

The name of N. G. Chernyshevsky is closely associated with the social-political movement of the sixties in Russia. As Chernyshevsky himself stated, the sixties was the period when the peasant question, i.e., the question of emancipating the serfs, had become "the sole subject of all thoughts and of all conversation."* The fact that the peasant question was the central question in that period was an indication of the deep social changes that were taking place in Russia at that time. Economic development was pushing Russia on to the path of capitalism. This found expression in the fairly rapid development of industry in the towns, the growth of the elements of capitalism in feudal-landlord farming and of commodity relationships in peasant farming. The development of capitalist relationships in Russia was hindered by age-old feudal relationships, and particularly by serfdom. The further untrammelled development of capitalism called primarily for a mass of free workers. The necessity of expanding the home market, of developing trade and the money system, of introducing new techniques and machines in production, and in agriculture in particular, in short, the needs of developing capitalism, came into direct conflict with

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. I, 1906, p. 87.

the prevailing feudal relationships. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War (1853-56) glaringly revealed the utter wretchedness and backwardness of the Russian serf system. The tsarist autocracy was compelled to take the path of "reform" from above, the more so that revolutionary unrest in the country, primarily the spontaneous peasant "revolts," threatened the autocracy and the serf system with more radical changes from below.

Thus, "the force of economic development, which was drawing Russia on the path of capitalism,"* brought the peasant question into the forefront, and the way this question was settled was to determine the character and path of development of capitalism in Russia. It was quite natural, therefore, that this fundamental question should have become the point of collision of the principal classes in Russian society at that time.

The ruling landlord class was unable to withstand the rising tide of peasant revolt; the serf-owners "could no longer retain the old, tottering forms of economy";** on the other hand they realized that if they themselves took measures to change the forms of serfdom, they could make

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 17, p. 95.

** *Ibid.*

the incipient development of capitalism serve their own interests.

The "divergent" interests of the various groups among the nobility in connection with the reform did not concern the principle of "emancipation," but only the method of carrying it out. As Lenin observed: "The notorious struggle between the serf-owners and the liberals, which was so exaggerated and embellished by our liberal and liberal-Narodnik historians, was an *internal* struggle among the ruling classes, chiefly an *internal struggle among the landlords, exclusively* over the extent and form of the *concessions.*"* There was agreement between the reactionary landlords and the liberals on the main point, namely, the land: landlordism was to remain, the peasants were to have no right to land, and all the measures for the "emancipation" of the serfs were to be carried out in the name of the tsar. Both the die-hards and the liberals stood for the "emancipation" of the serfs "from above." This meant the gradual reform of the serf system, its adaptation to the new conditions of capitalism; such was the path the landlord and liberal sections of Russian society of that time stood for.

This determined the class content of the so-called "peasant reform." As Lenin wrote: "The

* *Ibid.*, p. 96.

'peasant reform' was a bourgeois reform carried out by the serf-owners. It was a step in the direction of transforming Russia into a bourgeois monarchy. The content of the peasant reform was bourgeois. . . ."* Chernyshevsky fully appreciated the bourgeois character of this reform; in his celebrated article "Unaddressed Letters," he wrote: ". . . The powers that be [i.e., the serf-owning landlords—*M. G.*] undertook to carry out a programme that was not their own [i.e., it was the programme of the bourgeoisie—*M. G.*], a programme based on principles out of harmony with the character of these powers." The inevitable result of this was "a change in the forms of relationship between the landlords and the peasants, with only a slight, almost imperceptible, change in the content of this relationship. . . . The intention was to preserve the content of serfdom and to abolish only its forms."**

Lenin wrote: "It required the genius of a Chernyshevsky to understand so clearly at that time, when the peasant reform was only being introduced (when it had not yet been properly elucidated even in Western Europe), that its character was fundamentally bourgeois, that even at that

**Ibid.*, p. 95.

** N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. X, Part 2, 1906, pp. 301-02.

time Russian 'society' and the Russian 'state' were ruled and governed by social classes which were irreconcilably hostile to the toilers and which undoubtedly made the ruin and expropriation of the peasantry a foregone conclusion."*

Lenin noted that in the period when the "peasant reform" was carried out a revolutionary situation existed in Russia. During the years immediately preceding the 'reform' there had been a steady increase in the revolutionary activity of the serf-peasant masses, and after the promulgation of the Manifesto of February 19, 1861, proclaiming the abolition of serfdom, these activities, far from subsiding, grew in intensity. The peasantry's profound disappointment with the character of the "reform" carried out by the ruling class stirred up a new revolutionary wave in the country. In many places the peasants reacted to their "emancipation" by open unrest, disorders and revolts. For example, when the Manifesto was proclaimed, an insurrection broke out in the village of Bezdna, in the Kazan Gubernia, which was cruelly suppressed by the armed forces of the tsar.

Unrest also broke out in the principal centres of the country. The underground revolutionary

* V. I. Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, Moscow 1951, p. 258.

forces widely extended their activities. Large quantities of secretly printed leaflets and manifestoes appeared, calling for a determined struggle to overthrow tsarism. For example, a clergyman wrote: "Seditious manifestoes are pouring down like hail.... These manifestoes are being distributed chiefly by the hungry youth among the civil service people. Among them there are *hosts* of proletarians. They are all future sansculottes." "The *pocket printing-presses* are working tirelessly...."

Underground revolutionary literature also spread to the provincial towns and to the rural districts. In the Chernigov Gubernia, copies of Herzen's *Baptizer Property* and other of his works were found among peasants. Belinsky's "Letter to Gogol,"* and copies of the *Sovremennik* containing essays by Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov passed from hand to hand. The dissemination of revolutionary-democratic ideas by means of political manifestoes, essays and literature had a stimulating effect upon the minds of the advanced section of Russian society and roused it for the struggle against the conditions that oppressed and degraded human individuality.

One of the important manifestations of the

* In this letter Belinsky denounced serfdom, monarchy and the Orthodox Church.—*Ed.*

rising revolutionary tide in the period we are discussing was the student movement. Despite the repressive measures taken by the authorities and the efforts of the reactionary section of the professors to foster among the mass of the students the spirit of submission and loyalty to the tsar, the minds of the young people were dominated by the ideas propounded by Belinsky, Herzen and Chernyshevsky. Things reached such a pitch that the tsar issued an order that the universities be temporarily closed.

The crisis in the "upper circles" expressed itself in the attempts of the ruling landlord class to "renovate" the country by means of what were in essence bourgeois reforms. We have already spoken of these reforms. It must be emphasized once again that the ruling upper circles were compelled to take this step by their fear of the revolutionary initiative of the "lower classes." Political and moral confusion reigned in the ruling circles. But the temporal and spiritual agents of tsarism were not the only ones to be filled with fear and alarm; the liberal critics, professors and writers also hastened to the side of "law and order." From the moment it arose, Russian liberalism, to its eternal disgrace, displayed abject loyalty to tsarism. Unite at all cost—everybody, from the most reactionary serf-owners to bourgeois liberals, rally in one camp—this became

their most urgent slogan of the day. Professor Shevyryov, one of the ideological servitors of tsarism, wrote from Paris: "It is a pity that Aksakov and Katkov are quarrelling. This is not the time for quarrelling. Pride must be thrust aside." Katkov, displeased with Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, and regarding Bazarov, the hero in this novel, as an apologist of the *Sovremennik*, wrote: "... Remember that in addition to art there is also the political question. Who can tell what this fellow can turn into?"

The united camp of counter-revolution was fully aware of the direction from which the chief danger threatened it, and who was the ideological inspirer of the ever-spreading revolutionary movement. It was Chernyshevsky, the finest representative of the revolutionary commoners who had taken the place of the revolutionaries of the nobility.

Chernyshevsky was, indeed, the generally recognized leader of the revolutionary-democratic trend. His activities reflected the fundamental interests of the vast masses of the Russian peasantry and their struggle against serfdom and tsarism. Chernyshevsky consistently and resolutely fought autocracy and serfdom, ruthlessly exposed the Russian liberals, and strove to formulate from the point of view of advanced science of his time the conduct, the tactics and strat-

egy of the democratic revolutionaries who were at the head of the peasant revolution. Chernyshevsky was the central figure who most fully and comprehensively reflected that revolutionary epoch.

That is why he earned the bitter hatred of the Russian feudal landlords and of the Russian liberals who followed in their wake. That is why they resorted to every despicable means to attack him: open persecution, denunciation, black mail and provocation. So eager were Chernyshevsky's class enemies to bring about his destruction that they even accused the tsarist police authorities of being tardy and irresolute. In an anonymous letter to Potapov of the Third Department, i.e., the Secret Service, somebody wrote: "Rid us of Chernyshevsky for the sake of public peace."

But right to the end Chernyshevsky remained at his fighting post, the post of great leader of the peasant revolution. He fought his enemies not only in the political field, but also in the ideological, the theoretical field. His superiority over them as a theoretician was undisputed. He was always the victor in the ideological battles he fought against them: the aesthetes among the critics Dudyshkin and Druzhinin; the economist Vernadsky, the ideologist of the Russian bourgeoisie; the bourgeois professor and "guardian" Chicherin; the philosophizing obscurantist Yurkevich, and their ilk, for in his duels with them

he was guided by the materialist and revolutionary-democratic world outlook.

The historical importance of Chernyshevsky's literary activities lies in that they most correctly generalized from the point of view of science of that time the revolutionary experience in Russia in the epoch of the profound crisis of the serf system. By this Chernyshevsky undoubtedly made an immense contribution to the development of revolutionary thought not only in his own country, but in all the advanced countries in the world. Marx studied Chernyshevsky's works on the "peasant reform" with special attention and expressed the opinion that they did "real honour to Russia."* For the importance of the services he rendered, Chernyshevsky has no equal in the history of the revolutionary movement before Marx, for his theoretical system reflected one of the most important and acute periods of human history and its direct purpose was to serve as a weapon of the broad masses of the people who were striving to abolish the feudal form of exploitation in a vast country like Russia. By his work in the field of theory, Chernyshevsky ideologically prepared the political revolution that was maturing in Russia in the sixties.

* *The Correspondence of K. Marx and F. Engels with Russian Political Leaders*, Russ. ed., 1947, p. 29.

In his famous manifesto "To the Gentry's Peasants" he called upon the people to take up the axe as the only reliable means of achieving real emancipation, of abolishing serf dependence and oppression.

Thus, the object of Chernyshevsky's public and literary activities was to transform the peasant revolution from a possibility, as it was then, into reality. He tried to give the sporadic, spontaneous revolts of the peasants an organized character, and to take into account and utilize in the struggle against tsarism the revolutionary experience accumulated by the Russian people and also by the toiling masses in the West. His idea was that the victorious peasant revolution in Russia would deprive the landlords of all the land, abolish tsarism, and open the road for the socialist transformation of the country. His aim was to rouse the peasantry for a socialist revolution. This was the epoch when, as Lenin said, "democracy and socialism were merged in one inseparable and indissoluble whole. . . ."

The revolution that Chernyshevsky envisaged, however, could only result in the thorough eradication of serfdom, in the organization of Russian society on the most consistent democratic basis, and in the opening of the road of development in Russia not for socialism, but for capitalism. Objectively, Chernyshevsky was the advocate

of the revolutionary-democratic path of development as against the path of liberal compromise. His peasant revolutionary socialism was a form of utopian socialism. He linked socialism with the backward Russian village community.

As is known, the revolutionary situation of 1859-61 did not develop into revolution. At that time Russia still lacked that social class that is capable of bringing about a successful social revolution. The sporadic peasant revolts did not smash the tsarist regime. Reaction increased in the country. Chernyshevsky, the leader of the Russian revolutionary democrats, was arrested and sentenced to a long term of exile in Siberia.

Chernyshevsky is a landmark in the history of our people's liberation movement. "At first—nobles and landlords, the Decembrists* and Herzen. The circle of these revolutionaries was a narrow one. They were very far removed from the people. But their work was not in vain. The Decembrists awakened Herzen. Herzen launched revolutionary agitation.

"This agitation was taken up, extended, strengthened, and tempered by the revolutionary commoners, beginning with Chernyshevsky and

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* *Decembrists*—Russian revolutionaries from the nobility, who on December 14, 1825, organized an armed uprising against the tsarist autocracy.—*Ed.*

ending with the heroes of the 'Narodnaya Volya.'* The circle of fighters widened, their contacts with the people became closer. 'The young helmsmen of the impending storm,' Herzen said of them. But as yet it was not the storm itself.

"The storm is the movement of the masses themselves. The proletariat, the only class that is revolutionary to the end, rose at the head of the masses and for the first time aroused millions of peasants to open revolutionary struggle."**

The Russian proletariat came out at the head of the liberation movement in Russia and raised the Russian revolution to a new and higher level. Under the guidance of the Communist Party the Russian proletariat overthrew the rule of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and, in a stern struggle against all the enemies of the people, led our country to the victory of socialism.

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The name of Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky is closely associated with the social revolutionary movement of the sixties. True, he lived beyond that period, but he spent those later years

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* *Narodnaya Volya*—a secret terrorist society founded in 1879 for revolutionary struggle against the tsarist autocracy.—*Ed.*

** V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Moscow 1952, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 280.

in prison, penal servitude and exile. In this respect, the glorious life of this great Russian revolutionist was profoundly tragic. During his childhood and youth (1828-46) he lived in Saratov. After that, for five years (1846-50) he was a student of the History and Philological Faculty of the St. Petersburg University, and after graduating he, for two and a half years (1851-53), taught literature at a gymnasium in Saratov. He returned to St. Petersburg in 1853 and became a contributor to the magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski.* Later he began to contribute to the *Sovremennik* and soon became chief editor of this magazine, which at that time practically represented the radical-democratic movement.

In the *Sovremennik* he published his famous literary reviews: "Essays on the Gogol Period of Russian Literature," "Lessing and His Times," and "Pushkin"; his essays on history: "The July Monarchy," "The Conflict of Parties in France in the Reign of Louis XVIII and Charles X," and "Cavaignac"; his essays on philosophy: "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," and "A Criticism of the Philosophical Prejudices Against Common Ownership"; and his essays on political economy: "Comments on Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*" and "Outlines of Political Economy According to Mill." The "Comments" and "Outlines" are important in them-

selves, for in them Chernyshevsky stands forth as a brilliant critic of bourgeois political economy. This was noted at the time by Marx, who wrote:

"... It is a declaration of bankruptcy by bourgeois economy, an event on which the great Russian scholar and critic, N. Chernyshevsky, has thrown the light of a master mind in his 'Outlines of Political Economy According to Mill.' "*

In 1862, Chernyshevsky was arrested for his revolutionary activities and confined in the Fortress of St. Peter and Paul. There he wrote his famous novel *What Is To Be Done?*, which served as a text-book for generations of Russian revolutionists. In 1864 the tsarist authorities sentenced Chernyshevsky to "civil execution" (i.e., mock execution) followed by penal servitude (1864-72) and by exile to Vilyuisk (1872-83).

From Siberia he went to live in Astrakhan and a few months before he died he went to Saratov, but in both places the conditions for him were as stringent as they had been in Siberia. Chernyshevsky died on October 17, 1889, at the age of 61.

Thus, he spent more than half of his independent active life as a prisoner of the tsar. Heroical-

* K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 19. Author's Preface to the Second Edition.

ly he bore his long isolation and the refined moral torture and physical privation to which he was subjected, and remained to the last moment an indomitable revolutionary and materialist thinker.

* * *

Of course, Chernyshevsky was brought up, and his mind was moulded, primarily under the influence of his Russian environment. The opinion, formerly widespread, and still held in some quarters, that his social-political and philosophical views were influenced entirely by the West totally contradicts the Marxist-Leninist view of the matter. There can be no doubt that the West, which was revolutionary at that time, did help to mould his mind to some extent; but it is perfectly obvious that in tracing Chernyshevsky's development as a revolutionist and thinker, we must start from the social and ideological conditions in Russia in his time.

From his childhood Chernyshevsky had before him the gloomy picture of tyranny, cruelty and human suffering. The majority of unhappy and suffering people he saw in his childhood were serf peasants. Everyday life confronted him with the problem of the cause of the people's suffering and with the necessity of finding a way out of these unbearable conditions. An enormous factor in his mental development were the advanced

Russian thinkers, particularly Herzen and Belinsky, with whose works he was already acquainted when he was in Saratov.

Chernyshevsky entered the St. Petersburg University with the firm intention of devoting himself to the noble and patriotic task of helping to develop science in Russia. He soon realized, however, that the chief obstacles to this were tsarism and serfdom. His attitude towards the autocracy and the serf system that prevailed in Russia took definite shape in his student years, and it was in this period that his revolutionary-democratic convictions took shape.

The struggle against serfdom and autocracy had been started by progressive Russian people long before that; in fact, it had never ceased in spite of the cruelties perpetrated by the tsarist authorities. This struggle found reflection in the works of the Russian poets and fiction writers which Chernyshevsky had eagerly read since his youth, and through which he became acquainted with the advanced democratic ideology that had developed in Russian society. This struggle found reflection particularly in journalism, which, owing to the conditions prevailing in the country, was, perhaps, the only sphere where, resorting to every device to overcome the obstacles raised by the censorship, it was still possible to discuss urgent social problems. Shevyryov aptly described the

role played by journalism in Russia when he wrote: "Is not a magazine a pulpit, but one that towers over the whole of vast Russia and influences all its parts?..."

It was from this pulpit that for fifteen years the voice of Belinsky was heard, inspiring and rousing the people for a self-sacrificing struggle against serfdom and tsarism. Belinsky's influence was enormous in St. Petersburg, where Chernyshevsky went to take up his studies. Shortly afterwards, having found his bearings in the course of events, he established contact with the underground revolutionary movement and came into close relations with Khanykov, a prominent member of Petrashevsky's revolutionary circle. As is known, one of the chief reasons for the cruel punishment meted out to the members of this circle was the discovery among its members of copies of Belinsky's "Letter to Gogol." It is interesting to note also that it was with Khanykov that Chernyshevsky first discussed the possibility of revolution in Russia, the classes that were capable of and interested in taking part in it, the emancipation of the serfs, and other urgent questions. Belinsky was still alive when Chernyshevsky arrived in St. Petersburg. He died in the year when that decisive change took place in Chernyshevsky's life, which finally determined the great role he was to play in the revolutionary movement

in Russia. It may be said that Chernyshevsky took over the banner of the struggle against tsarism directly out of the hands of Belinsky.

Another person who exercised strong influence in the moulding of Chernyshevsky's opinions was Herzen. In St. Petersburg, Chernyshevsky was closely connected with the circle conducted by Vvedensky; he joined that circle and was one of its active members. The following is what Chernyshevsky himself says about a visit he paid to Vvedensky: we talked about "a revolution in our country," about "the cruelty and coarseness of the tsar," and about "how good it would be if a man could be found brave enough to sacrifice his life to put him out of the way," and "towards the end we read Iskander."* Further evidence of the profound respect young Chernyshevsky entertained for Herzen is provided by his conversation with Klientova, who was personally acquainted with Herzen's wife and received letters from her. "Again we talked about Iskander, about Russian literature...," writes Chernyshevsky. We repeat, in addition to Belinsky and Herzen, the best traditions of Russian literature and poetry influenced Chernyshevsky's development; Pushkin, Gogol and Lermontov were objects of his admiration and pride.

* Herzen.—*Ed.*

Chernyshevsky himself later fully described his social-political and ideological genealogy in his "Essays on the Gogol Period of Russian Literature."

Chernyshevsky's period at the university coincided not only with the crisis in the serf system in Russia and with the rising tide of the struggle against it, but also with the period of revolutionary upheavals in the West. As is known, the lessons of the revolutions of 1848 were colossal for the whole of subsequent revolutionary development. Young Chernyshevsky followed the development of the 1848 revolutions with close attention, and this also helped him to devise more effective means of fighting serfdom and the tsarist autocracy than those possessed by his predecessors.

An extremely valuable documentary evidence of Chernyshevsky's mental evolution is the diary he began to keep in the middle of 1848. Nearly every day he made a detailed record of his thoughts and ideas, defined his attitude towards the social events that were taking place at the time, expressed his opinion, favourable or unfavourable, of the writer whose work he was studying. When reading this diary one feels the pulsation of his passionate heart and can trace the development of the militant, revolutionary, materialist thinker.

The diary shows that Chernyshevsky reacted primarily to urgent political events. Grasping

more and more thoroughly the meaning and significance of the revolutionary events that were unfolding, he could soon say of himself with complete justification that in his convictions he belonged to the "extreme party," to the advocates of a "red republic." But already at that time he was aware that the bourgeois republic for which the struggle was raging in the West would not create real equality between the haves and the have-nots. He, therefore, stood for the principle that "the majority must always prevail and the minority must exist for the majority and not the majority for the minority. . . ." He detested the bourgeois liberals who were fond of talking about liberty and equality, but left untouched the social system that was based on the enslavement and oppression of the people. Addressing the liberals, he wrote: "Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen, you think it is a matter of having a republic in name and of you being in power. But it is not so. It is a matter of freeing the lower class from slavery not only in law, but in fact . . . so that they may eat, drink, marry, bring up their children, maintain their parents and receive education, that men should not become corpses or desperadoes and that women should not have to sell their bodies."*

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. I, 1939, p. 110.

Somewhat later Chernyshevsky exposed the nature of the monarchist state. A monarch, and still more so an absolute monarch, he said, is the apex of the aristocratic hierarchy and belongs body and soul to it. "It is like the apex of the aristocratic cone."* It is not a matter of the individual monarch, but of the class on which his power rests and whose interests he serves. It was impossible, in his opinion, to abolish the colossal machine of exploitation of the toilers by peaceful means; the people could achieve their freedom only by fighting. He wrote: "Let the oppression of one class by another begin, then there will be a struggle; then the oppressed will realize that they are such under the present order of things, but that there can be a different order of things under which they will not be oppressed; they will realize that they are not oppressed by God, but by men, that they have no hope of justice or of anything else, and that there are no people among the oppressors who stand up for them."** These thoughts that ran through the mind of young Chernyshevsky subsequently led him to the firm conviction that the whole of human history is the history of uncompromising and fierce struggle between classes, that a genuine revolutionist can-

* *Ibid.*, p. 356.
** *Ibid.*

not ignore this fact, but must take it as his starting point, for the class which does not fight for power and exercise political power cannot save itself from oppression, poverty and ignorance. It is this aspect of Chernyshevsky's activities that marks the fundamental difference between him and the utopian socialists of the West.

* * *

The moulding of Chernyshevsky's revolutionary-democratic convictions proceeded hand in hand with the moulding of his philosophical views. In his student days in St. Petersburg he studied the works of the outstanding scientists and thinkers of his time: historians, sociologists, economists and philosophers. When he graduated from the university he was already a convinced revolutionist and materialist. As has already been stated, this was due primarily to the whole course of social life and of advanced public thought in Russia. In the last of his works Belinsky had firmly taken the stand of materialism. Herzen, in his "Letters on the Study of Nature," as Lenin said, "stood on the threshold of dialectical materialism." It was from them that Chernyshevsky first learned philosophy. It was they who fired him with the passion for freedom and filled his heart with burning hatred for autocracy and serfdom and for all forms of human exploitation and

oppression. Chernyshevsky was undoubtedly influenced by Feuerbach's materialism.

Continuing the materialist line in Russian philosophy that was independently developed by Belinsky and Herzen in the forties, Chernyshevsky raised it to a new and higher stage—to the level of "an integral philosophical materialism" (Lenin).

As Belinsky and Herzen had done, Chernyshevsky concentrated his attention on the criticism of German idealist philosophy. Under the conditions then prevailing the latter constituted a grave danger, and Chernyshevsky regarded its exposure as a most urgent task. It must also be observed that he was broadly aware of the class nature of German idealism as the ideology which justified the political conservatism of the German bourgeoisie and the feudal backwardness of Germany; he realized that it was the reaction to materialism.

The object of Kant's philosophy, said Chernyshevsky, was "to defend free will, the immortality of the soul, the existence of God . . . these convictions so dear to his heart . . . ," to defend them "from Diderot and his friends."* He pointed out that Schelling was a representative of that

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1953, p. 534.

party in Germany, which, terrified by the revolution, "sought tranquillity in medieval institutions" and in the restoration of the feudal state.* He wrote that Hegel's system was imbued with the spirit that "dominated public opinion at the time of the Restoration. . . ."** Slavish submission to the abominable conditions then prevailing in Germany, the desire always to be reconciled to these conditions and to reconcile science to them, the constant striving to show that the political measures of their dull and despotic feudal rulers were adequate forms of expression of reason and truth—this, in Chernyshevsky's opinion, was what was behind the abstract constructions of the German idealists.

In addition to his social-class characterization of German philosophy, Chernyshevsky gave a brilliant critique of its theoretical principles, particularly of those of Hegel's philosophy. As is known, in many ways, this critique coincides with that given by Engels of Hegel's philosophy. Chernyshevsky pointed to its inherent "contradictoriness," its "duality," to the contradiction between Hegel's "deductions," i.e., his system, and his "principles," i.e., his method. He described the principles (method) of Hegel's philosophy as

* *Ibid.*, p. 51.
** *Ibid.*, p. 67.

"broad," "profound," and "fruitful," and its deductions (system) as "narrow," "paltry" and "false," i.e., conservative and reactionary. He said that the dialectical principle had presented itself to Hegel in a "nebulous," i.e., distorted form, and that he had not adhered to it consistently. The great Russian thinker set himself the task of freeing the "sound part"* of Hegel's philosophy, i.e., the idea of development, from its idealism and mysticism, to rework it thoroughly and to use it.

This alone shows how much higher Chernyshevsky stood than Feuerbach. The intellectual development of this brilliant Russian materialist thinker proceeded along the same path as that of Marx and Engels. In Russia the same path had been taken before Chernyshevsky by Belinsky and Herzen, who, as Chernyshevsky said, independently undertook critically to overcome Hegel by their own efforts. In the persons of its outstanding representatives Belinsky, Herzen and Chernyshevsky, Russian advanced philosophy developed in the direction of Marxism.

Subjecting Hegel's idealism to thorough criticism, Chernyshevsky shows that Hegel was unable to eliminate the contradiction between the abstract and the concrete, between the general and

* *Ibid.*, p. 468.

the individual. He points out that for Hegel, the concrete was the form of the realization of the idea and, therefore, he shifted the "centre of interest" to the logical and abstract, in this sharing the grave mistake of all idealists who believed that this was the foundation and essence of all the phenomena of the world. In Chernyshevsky's opinion, this metaphysical rupture between the general and the individual, which is the logical corollary of the very essence of the idealist system, made Hegel's philosophy totally unsatisfactory.

Chernyshevsky severely castigated Hegel also for his idealist conception of the relation between life and knowledge, between theory and practice. Hegel the idealist transformed theoretical knowledge into an end in itself. Naturally, Chernyshevsky could not accept such a conception of theory elevated to a deified mystical absolute. The revolutionary democrat Chernyshevsky strove to create a theory that grew out of life and would become a powerful weapon in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society. In his opinion, life does not exist for theory, as Hegel and the other idealists proclaimed, but theory exists for life, for its transformation and improvement.

Chernyshevsky, however, did not limit himself to criticizing the reactionary ideology propounded in Germany by the German philosophers, and by

Hegel in particular. He gave an exceptionally apt and scathing characterization of many of the French thinkers in the period of the Restoration who paraded in the garb of bourgeois liberalism—Guizot, Thiers, Cousin and others. He pointed out that in French science "conceptions had become frightfully shallow," that the scientists in that country had lost their former "resolute principles" and "strict consistency in their mode of thought," and were concerned "with reconciling the irreconcilable," with justifying prejudices, with "combining scientific truth with arbitrary fantasies," and so forth. He said that the liberalism of these gentlemen was utterly false, putrid, sheer affectation. He rightly observed that they were "concerned only with abstract rights and not with the welfare of the people," the very conception of which was alien to them. Their liberalism was only "a bait with which to catch the nation on their hook," in order to capture power, which they needed only "in order to fill their pockets."* These were people filled with narrow and smug egoism and, of course, nothing else could be expected "from these degenerates who survived the great internal struggle which had absorbed all the noblest forces of the French people."** These ob-

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1953, p 472.

** *Ibid.*, p. 473.

servations of Chernyshevsky's are a correct appraisal of the despicable and bloody role played by Thiers, Guizot and others who at that time were the leaders of bourgeois reaction.

* * *

Studying the history of philosophical doctrines (he was not acquainted with Marx's theory), Chernyshevsky realized that in none of the philosophical systems of the past was it possible to find a ready-made theoretical weapon that the toilers could use in their struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society. He showed that every philosophical system grew on a definite social-political basis and therefore corresponded to the interests of one or other ruling class. He emphasized the class character of philosophy and science. He showed the connection between the various idealist trends that were widely current in the beginning of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the mood of the bourgeoisie at that time. He wrote that the ruling classes of Western Europe were terrified by the inevitable changes in society, i.e., revolution, that were threatening them. "Grief over their impending fate creates confusion in their minds." They lose all ability objectively to cognize the historical process and in the sphere of ideology create various anti-scientific theories and systems.

Chernyshevsky was profoundly convinced that a progressive science and philosophy could be created only by a thinker who firmly adhered to the point of view of the toilers. He plainly said that the toiler, "thanks to his robust nature and to his stern experience of life . . . understands the essence of things much better, more correctly, and more deeply than people of the more fortunate classes."

The conclusions Chernyshevsky drew from all this were the following: First, the working classes cannot and must not be guided in their struggle by the old philosophical theories, which are the ideological weapons of the exploiting classes. Second, the working classes must elaborate their own philosophical world outlook, which will be different from that of the exploiting classes. Third, only materialist philosophy can serve as the scientific world outlook of the working classes. Chernyshevsky was convinced that the creation of a working-class materialist world outlook would be the forerunner and inevitable condition of the victorious struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society.

These were extremely profound postulates. A successful struggle for socialism cannot be waged without a materialist philosophy, a materialist science, to light up the path of struggle. Lenin wrote: "*. . . the role of vanguard fighter can be*

fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory. In order to get some concrete understanding of what this means, let the reader recall such predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy as Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky. . . ."*

Chernyshevsky counted himself among the ideologists of the toiling masses. In his works he developed a system of philosophical materialism in the conviction that such a system would serve as the spiritual weapon of the people who were fighting against the reign of violence and oppression and for socialism.

To be able properly to understand and appraise the character of Chernyshevsky's materialism we must first of all elucidate the fundamental principle of his philosophy, what he himself called the anthropological principle in philosophy. It must be borne in mind that Chernyshevsky ardently championed this principle under the peculiar conditions that prevailed in Russia in the sixties of the nineteenth century, when various fashionable idealist and eclectical theories were very widespread. Naturally, in these theories special attention was devoted to man, who, as a rule, was regarded from the subjective and dualist point of view. It was in combating these views

* V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, Moscow 1952, p. 43.

that Chernyshevsky propounded his anthropological principle.

What, then, was the essence of this principle?

Explaining the essence of the anthropological principle, Chernyshevsky wrote: "... a man must be regarded as a single being having only one nature; ... a human life must not be cut into two halves, each belonging to a different nature. ..."* The anthropological conception of man is an integral conception of man, a conception of the unity of the human organism. According to Chernyshevsky's anthropological principle, the unity of human nature is based on man's bodily organism. The body, i.e., matter, is primary. Chernyshevsky said that natural science had reached the stage of development where it was possible to show that man's sensations and psychology were conditioned by inner physiological processes without resorting to the "aid" of other, outside forces. For Chernyshevsky, the mind, thinking, was only a special property of highly-developed matter. He denied that the mind had independent, substantial existence as the idealists claim, and asserted that it is the product of the development of matter. Chernyshevsky's anthropological principle was a principle for the materialist solution

* N. G. Chernyschevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1953, pp. 132-33.

of the fundamental problem of philosophy, namely, the relation of mind to matter, since it took the bodily organism as the basis and regarded psychic phenomena as the result of the work of the brain.

But what is man himself, his organism, from the standpoint of Chernyshevsky's anthropological principle? He wrote: "Physiology and medicine find that the human organism is an extremely complex chemical combination that goes through an extremely complex chemical process that we call life."* Man is a link in the general chain of the development of matter. Rocks, plants and animals, including man, are different combinations of matter. Thus, the anthropological principle developed by Chernyshevsky leads to the materialist-monistic conception of man and, regarding man as a part of nature, to the materialist-monistic conception of the entire objective material world, and of its laws, that exist outside of the mind.

Thinking on these lines, Chernyshevsky sometimes slips into mechanicism, but for all that he remains a consistent materialist in his understanding of the phenomena of nature. In his hands, the anthropological principle in philosophy was an important means of upsetting the ideolog-

* *Ibid.*, p. 104.

ical props of the old world of exploitation, namely, religion and idealism. This was the fundamental progressive significance of Chernyshevsky's anthropological principle under the conditions prevailing in Russia in his time.

In propounding the anthropological principle when combating idealism and religion, Chernyshevsky mentioned Feuerbach as a thinker who advocated this principle in his philosophy; but this must not be urged as a reason for identifying Chernyshevsky's position with that of Feuerbach's, for there was a big difference between their respective philosophies.

Feuerbach specialized in the study of religion, and of Christianity in particular. He asserted that the conception of God is based on the essence of man and argued that the supernatural, religious world consists of man's mystically disturbed feelings, desires and thoughts. The chief conclusion he drew from this was that the secret of religion is anthropology. Feuerbach's anthropology was clothed in theological garb and was proclaimed a new religion.

Chernyshevsky's materialism was entirely free from the idealist and religio-ethical coating that was characteristic of Feuerbach's philosophy; and he made no attempt whatever to give his philosophy a religious hue. He clearly saw the fundamental antithesis between the materialist

and the religious world outlooks, and he consistently opposed his materialist principle to religion and clericalism.

Further, criticizing idealism, and Hegel's idealism in particular, from the standpoint of his anthropologism, Feuerbach argued that the Absolute Idea in Hegel's philosophy was nothing but human reason released from its sensual restrictions. According to Feuerbach, anthropology was also the secret of idealism. From this he arrived at the conclusion that true philosophy is neither idealism nor materialism, but anthropology. One cannot help perceiving in this a striving to place anthropological philosophy above materialism and idealism, to find a new, "third" path for philosophy. It is known that Feuerbach objected to the term "materialism."

Chernyshevsky, however, while propounding the anthropological principle in philosophy, had no thought of placing his philosophy somewhere in-between idealism and materialism. On the contrary, he unreservedly and emphatically regarded himself as belonging to the materialist camp, and was of the opinion that the fundamental division in philosophy was precisely between materialism and idealism. He was the thinker in the pre-Marx period who waged the most resolute and consistent struggle against idealism in all its forms.

Feuerbach made anthropology his universal philosophical principle, and on it he based his sociology; but all his attempts to explain the phenomena of social life on the basis of abstract and immutable physical or spiritual human qualities invariably led to idealistic speculation and metaphysics. Clothing social relationships in a religious garb, he misinterpreted the actual process of historical development.

Chernyshevsky, however, took the anthropological principle in philosophy as a methodological basis and set out, with its aid, also to study as deeply as possible the phenomena of social life. He strove to apply this principle to aesthetics, ethics, political economy and sociology. But whereas the anthropological principle made it possible to find materialist solutions for the initial problems of philosophy concerning the relation of thinking to matter, to nature, it proved incapable of explaining the transition from the abstract to the concrete, historical man, i.e., of providing a materialist solution of the problems concerning the theory of society. Chernyshevsky's anthropological principle is materialism when it is applied to nature, but it is idealism when it is used to explain the transition to history. That is why in his *Philosophical Notebooks* V. I. Lenin wrote: "... Feuerbach's and Chernyshevsky's

term 'anthropological principle' in philosophy is *narrow*."*

Chernyshevsky was not a philosopher in the narrow sense of the term; he was a man of revolutionary action, of revolutionary practice. Unlike Feuerbach, who was extremely indifferent to political activity, Chernyshevsky fully appreciated the powerful role played by revolutionary politics, and he closely linked the philosophy of revolutionary democracy with its practice.

Already in those days, Chernyshevsky ruthlessly criticized the race theory and exposed the class interests that fostered it. He saw a direct connection between this race theory and the slave system that then existed in the United States. "The slaveholders," he wrote, "belonged to the white race, the slaves were Negroes; therefore, in scientific treatises, the defence of slavery assumed the form of a theory that there are radical differences between the different races of mankind." The theory was created that "the bulk of the slaves were people of a different breed" and that there were people who "by nature's decree had to be slaves." Chernyshevsky strongly opposed such theories. "Those who are seeking in anthropology solutions for important historical prob-

* V., I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, Russ. ed. 1947, p. 58.

lems," he wrote, can have no doubt that "all races have sprung from the same ancestors." According to Chernyshevsky, all the differences between races, and even between nations of the same race, are purely "historical" and are due to the different conditions of their social life. He noted that the conditions of life, not only of different races and nations, but also of the members of a given nation, were different. Nations are divided into classes and occupational groups, which differ sharply from one another. By way of example he pointed to the Portuguese grandees who, he said, in their way of life and conceptions resembled the Swedish aristocrats more than they did the peasants of their own country. Similarly, the Portuguese peasants resembled the Scottish and Norwegian peasants more than they did the wealthy Lisbon merchants. Economic inequality created oppressed and ruling classes within each nation and gave rise to a struggle between them. Chernyshevsky rose to the level of understanding the class division of society and the role of the class struggle in the process of historical development.

Thus, when examining the concrete problems of social life, Chernyshevsky rose high above the narrow horizon of the abstract anthropological conception of man. "Man," he wrote, "is not an abstract legal entity, but a living being in whose

life and happiness the material side (economic conditions) is of extreme importance." Thus, the active revolutionary struggle gave him a more concrete historical and materialist conception of man, and this led him beyond the abstract anthropological principle. Chernyshevsky was a great economist of the pre-Marx period. Insisting on a concrete historical approach to social phenomena, he rose ever so much higher than Feuerbach, whose sociology was based on the abstract principles of "love." But, although constantly turning to "economic position," "forms of social life" and "material conditions" as the source of social development, Chernyshevsky was not yet able to show that the real basis of society were the total definite relations of production in the given historical period. He was not able to create the theory of the materialist conception of history.

* * *

As regards the theory of knowledge, Chernyshevsky firmly adhered to the standpoint of materialism and strongly combated scepticism, agnosticism, Kantianism, neo-Kantianism and other varieties of idealism.

Take a man whose arms are both sound, has he arms? Chernyshevsky ironically asks the naturalists who adhere to the standpoint of subjective idealism. After showing that this standpoint

leads to denial of the existence of our own organism, he continues: "... if we possess knowledge of our organism, then we possess knowledge of the clothes we wear, of the food we eat, of the water we drink, of the wheat from which we make bread, of the utensil in which we make it; of our houses, of the fields in which we grow wheat, of forests, brickyards, quarries from which we obtain the materials for building our houses, etc., etc. In short: if we are people, then we possess knowledge of an incalculable number of things; straight, direct knowledge of them; of the things themselves; we obtain this knowledge from our real life."

In Chernyshevsky's opinion, thinking is objective, i.e., there can be no thinking divorced from objects existing independently of us. "By its very nature, sensation necessarily presupposes the existence of two elements of thought, merged into one thought: firstly, there is the external object which creates the sensation; secondly, the being that is conscious of the sensation." A man's perceptions "depend not on himself, but on the objects he meets with.... The idea is created by the objects or phenomena which produce the impression."

This is a purely materialist conception of the source of cognition. The starting point is objects that exist independently of our minds, objects that

influence us, create our perceptions and ideas. Truth is not engendered by reason, but is created by life, by reality, and we acquire it through our sense organs.

From the fact that human knowledge is determined by the external world, by its influence upon our sense organs, Chernyshevsky unhesitatingly drew the further materialist conclusion that our sensations must be an adequate reflection of the objects that caused them. He strongly attacked Kant and his supporters who argued that man is not endowed with the gift of knowing things as they really are. "This is utter nonsense, when we are of sound mind and our eyes are sound," he wrote. "A man of sound mind with sound eyes sees the objects that he sees." "We see things exactly as they actually exist."

He did not deny that our knowledge is relative, but he rightly observed that in the language of the subjective idealists and agnostics the term relative knowledge has quite a different meaning. "It is used," he said, "as a respectable term, not likely to shock simpletons, to mask the idea that all our knowledge about external objects is not knowledge, but illusion." Here he quite rightly pointed to the chief vice of the subjectivists, agnostics and relativists, in whose opinion relative knowledge precludes objective knowledge.

Chernyshevsky emphatically rejected such an

interpretation of relative knowledge. Take man's knowledge about water, he said. The savage, perhaps, knows water only in one state—the liquid. Later, men learned that when water is boiled it is converted into vapour, and when frozen it is converted into ice. Still later the chemical composition of water was discovered. But does the fact that man gradually enriched his knowledge about water contradict what the savage knows about it? No, it does not. "Water, when it is not ice, or snow, or vapour, but water in the narrow sense of the term, is the same water that they know of. Their knowledge of water is true knowledge; very scanty, but true."

Thus, according to Chernyshevsky, the expansion of knowledge only supplements, deepens, enriches our former conceptions and brings us nearer to objective truth. He refused to recognize the insurmountable barriers the agnostics erected between human knowledge and the material world. He believed in the power of reason, science and practice, regarding the latter as the decisive criterion of truth. Noting the enormous role practice plays in the process of cognition, he wrote: "Practice is the great exposer of deception and self-deception not only in practical matters, but also in matters of feeling and thought. And that is why science accepts it today as an essential criterion of all controversial points." "What

is a matter of controversy in theory is fully settled by the practice of real life." Chernyshevsky drew quite close to the problem, solved for the first time by dialectical materialism, of the relation between absolute and relative truth. He expressed the profoundly correct idea that "without a history of a subject there can be no theory of the subject."

* * *

The principles of Chernyshevsky's philosophical materialism are most fully expressed in his famous essay "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," published in 1860. This was the theoretical manifesto of Russian revolutionary democracy, and around it raged one of the fiercest ideological battles ever fought until then in the history of the struggle between materialism and idealism, a battle that was an element of the general revolutionary situation of that epoch.

The first to reply to this essay was Professor Yurkevich of the Kiev Theological Academy. In an article entitled "From the Science of the Human Spirit," this obscurantist attacked Chernyshevsky primarily for his materialist solution of the fundamental problem of philosophy. In opposition to Chernyshevsky, he asserted that the unity of human nature has a spiritual basis, the eternal spirit; he erected an insurmountable

barrier of dualism between "external" and "internal" experience. Striking at Chernyshevsky's materialism, he asserted that the idea that it is possible to pass from external influence to sensation is absurd; sensation is a barrier, a wall, which separates the mind from the external world. In opposition to Chernyshevsky's call for an alliance between philosophy and natural science, psychology and physiology, Yurkevich denied in principle that it is possible to explain human mentality by the physiological processes upon which it is based; he argued that the "science of the spirit" is quite autonomous of the natural sciences. Later, in the magazine *Russky Vestnik* of February 1861, an article in reply to Chernyshevsky appeared, entitled "Old Gods and New Gods," written by Katkov, the editor, who accused the trend of which Chernyshevsky was the head of being unable to approach philosophical views critically and independently. At the end of this article Katkov strongly recommends the article of Yurkevich. In the third issue of *Russky Vestnik* another article by Katkov appeared entitled "Our Language and What Scoffers Are," written in opposition to Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. In the April and May issues of *Russky Vestnik*, Katkov published long excerpts from Yurkevich's article, preceded by a rapturous comment on that author.

Raising Yurkevich's article as the banner of the struggle against Chernyshevsky's materialism, the Katkov camp set out on a wide front to give battle to Chernyshevsky's party also in other spheres, primarily in the sphere of politics, in the endeavour to discredit Chernyshevsky as the distinguished ideologist of the peasant revolution.

Thus, the struggle that flared up around "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" least of all resembled a controversy between academic schools and trends. The opposing camps disagreed all along the line of theoretical, social and political activity. It was a struggle between two world outlooks—materialism and idealism—and reflected the collision between the two chief social and political trends in Russia in the sixties of the last century—revolutionary democracy and the united reaction. The spiritual weapons of all those who stood for the old order—from its avowed defenders to its liberal "critics"—were religion and idealism; against them was the revolutionary-democratic camp in Russia, under the banner of atheism, the natural sciences and materialism. It was this that lent the controversy over "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" its exceptional acrimony.

Chernyshevsky replied to his critics in his celebrated essays "Polemical Gems." After the appearance of the first series of the "Polemical

Gems" the liberal *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* joined in the fray against Chernyshevsky. The July issue of that magazine contained a special review of the first of the "Polemical Gems" by Dudyshkin, the editor of the "Literary Criticism" section, who also waxed enthusiastic over Yurkevich.

Chernyshevsky was perfectly aware of the social and political significance of the campaign that had been raised against him and he was, therefore, quite justified in calling his opponents reactionaries and in describing the idealist philosophical systems they defended as old junk utilized by reactionaries.

The cool and contemptuous tone in which the "Polemical Gems" were written roused Chernyshevsky's enemies to fury. They attacked him more fiercely than ever and sometimes denounced him in terms that undoubtedly prepared the ground for the harsh measures the tsar's government took against the great Russian revolutionist a year later.

Chernyshevsky was incarcerated in a fortress and prevented from speaking just at the time when freedom-loving Russia sorely needed his voice. The cruel rite of "civil (i.e., mock) execution" was performed over him, after which he was sent to penal servitude.

The progressive section of the Russian public, however, was fully aware that the victor in this

ideological struggle was Chernyshevsky. His advocacy of materialist philosophy left indelible traces on the Russian public mind. In his fierce struggle against religion and idealism Chernyshevsky further developed the materialist traditions of Russian philosophy and made it a harder and sharper weapon. Speaking of the splendid materialist traditions in Russian philosophy, V. I. Lenin placed Chernyshevsky on a par with Plekhanov. Chernyshevsky rendered a great service by spreading these traditions and imbuing generations of progressive people in Russia with them.

After getting Chernyshevsky out of the way, the tsar's government tried to eradicate the enormous revolutionary influence he exercised upon the progressive section of the Russian public. But far from falling into oblivion, Chernyshevsky became for revolutionary Russia a symbol of devotion to people and country. The tsar's government believed that the cruel and inhuman conditions of life in penal servitude and in exile would break Chernyshevsky's spirit as a revolutionist and thinker, but in this it was also mistaken. Chernyshevsky was a man of iron will, character and convictions.

Although in complete isolation, Chernyshevsky learned from the fragmentary information that reached him of the growing danger of neo-Kan-

tian and subjective-idealist philosophy that was coming into vogue at that time and began to seek means of combating it. His only means of communication with the outside world were the letters he sent to his relations and friends; but he turned these means into a pulpit from which, in the most detailed manner, he expounded his ideas about the necessity of having an advanced materialist world outlook and about the hostility between idealism and science, and called for an uncompromising struggle against idealism. He ridiculed those naturalists who in their quest for a general philosophical theory were caught on the hook of the bourgeois philosophers who preached subjectivism and agnosticism. He fiercely attacked those scientists who regarded Kant as their "companion." In one of his letters he, ridiculing Helmholtz, wrote: "My dear fellow, a mathematician, or a naturalist in general, has no right to look upon anything 'together with Kant.' Kant repudiates all natural science, and he denies the reality of pure mathematics. My dear fellow, Kant doesn't care a hang about what you do, or about you. Kant is no companion for you."*

In his letters from Siberia Chernyshevsky again stands before us as an uncompromising

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1953, pp. 533-34.

fighter against all deviations from the scientific world outlook, as a militant materialist. The struggle he waged against the Kantians and subjective idealists in the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century undoubtedly constitutes one of the brilliant pages in the history of materialist philosophy in Russia.

As is known, for its ideological level and adherence to principle, Lenin placed this struggle that Chernyshevsky waged on a par with Engels' criticism of this same bourgeois philosophy in that very same period. While noting certain flaws in Chernyshevsky's materialism due to historical conditions, Lenin emphasized that in his criticism of idealism "Chernyshevsky is entirely on Engels' level in so far as he takes Kant to task not for realism, but for agnosticism and subjectivism, not for recognition of the 'thing-in-itself,' but for inability to derive our knowledge from this objective source. . . ."*

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Chernyshevsky was not only a great materialist, but also an outstanding dialectician. He consistently adhered to the idea of the unity of the world, seeing this unity in the world's materi-

* V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Moscow 1952, p. 376.

ality; but his conception of unity included differences, contradictions. Thus, he says, the unity of human nature reveals itself in two, qualitatively different, kinds of phenomena: physical and moral. He advocated the idea that "the combination of heterogeneous properties in one object is the general law of things." He argued that highly complex combinations of matter reveal properties that are absent in the simple elements that comprise the complex bodies. For example, a compound in certain proportions of hydrogen and oxygen forms water, which possesses many properties that are not observed in either oxygen or hydrogen. Chernyshevsky uses this example to show that "quantitative difference passes into qualitative difference." In his commentary on Carpenter's book *Energy in Nature* he speaks of the different forms of motion and says that the conversion of heat into mechanical motion and vice versa is a law of nature.

This conception of matter and motion relieves Chernyshevsky's materialism of the crude, mechanistic one-sidedness of the old materialism. He saw reality as it is, in its dialectical movement and development. In contrast to the idealist Hegel, and following in the footsteps of Belinsky and Herzen, he elaborated dialectics on a materialist basis.

He did not, however, interest himself in dialectics in the abstract. For him, dialectics was a

methodological instrument for unerringly determining the way, the approach, to the achievement of the aims of the revolutionary-democratic movement. He was one of the first men in Russia consciously to apply certain aspects of the dialectical method for the purpose of substantiating revolutionary-democratic practice.

Chernyshevsky taught that no success can be achieved in any historically important cause without a struggle; but he was fully aware that the struggle that has most chance of success is one that is properly directed and organized. But what is needed to make a man cease to be a passive onlooker and become an active participant in oncoming events? He must base his practice not on an abstract ideal but on reality. "Only those desires that are based on reality," he wrote, "are of real importance; only those hopes that are roused by reality can be realized, and only in such matters as are accomplished with the aid of the forces and circumstances provided by reality."* Hence the paramount importance of taking into account the conditions upon which the given action directly or indirectly depends, for this enables us to know to what the events are leading, and to decide what conduct would be to our

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1953, p. 491.

advantage. Thus, successful revolutionary action is inconceivable without the science of tactics; and a genuine revolutionist cannot but be a tactician. In Chernyshevsky's opinion, a concrete approach to phenomena, concrete thinking, are most essential conditions for correct conduct, or tactics; and this, he urged, was the primary characteristic of the dialectical method.

He contrasted his concrete dialectical method to abstract metaphysical thinking. Abstract thinking is guided by eternal, absolute principles, whereas, said Chernyshevsky, "everything depends upon circumstances, upon the conditions of place and time." For example, is war disastrous or beneficial? This question cannot be answered in the abstract. There are wars that are disastrous for a nation; such are aggressive, predatory wars. But there are wars of another kind, beneficial, just wars, such as the war of 1812, "which was the salvation of the Russian nation."

There is nothing stationary or immutable in nature or in human society. Chernyshevsky knew that this is due to inherent contradictions. "... All life," he wrote, "is polarization, magnetism, electricity—everywhere you see divaricated forces striving in opposite directions. . . ."* A revolution-

* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Unpublished Works*, Russ. ed., 1939, p. 60.

ist must not ignore these opposite sides, these mutually excluding tendencies. He must be able to determine his conduct in conformity with the circumstances of place and time.

Chernyshevsky subjected to scathing criticism those who see only gradual evolution in history and rely on reforms. He sharply attacked the American economist Carey who preached the harmony of class interests. Chernyshevsky pointed out that the process of development is not a conflict between equivalent and equilibrate forces; in the process of development, one side gains preponderance over the other. "...The fundamental unity breaks up in numerous directions, of which the one that is most favoured by historical circumstances gains predominance and pushes the others into the background."* The conflict of irreconcilable contradictions leads to a revolutionary solution, to upheavals, to the destruction of the old and the rise of the new. "... Motion takes leap after leap...."** In Chernyshevsky's opinion, not a single historically important problem can be solved otherwise than by revolution. Revolution is the greatest creative force in history. Thus, the dialectical method served Chernyshevsky as

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* N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., 1906, Vol. III, p. 742.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 491.

a means of theoretically substantiating the inevitability of a peasant revolution.

In his well-known essay "A Criticism of the Philosophical Prejudices Against Common Ownership," Chernyshevsky set out to prove on the basis of the dialectical law of the negation of the negation that it was possible for Russia to go over to socialism without passing through the capitalist phase of development. He was perfectly well aware that capitalism changed only the form of exploitation of man by man, and that it caused the ruin of the vast masses of the working population. This brilliant ideologist of the revolutionary peasantry did not want his own beloved Russian people to share this fate. In his works he gave a profound critique of capitalism. While paying high tribute to the technical and scientific progress that capitalism promoted in the initial period of its development, and admitting that it was necessary to utilize it, he strongly opposed capitalism as a social and economic system for Russia.

Deeming it possible for Russia to avoid the capitalist stage of development, he advanced important theoretical arguments in support of his thesis. In doing so he came out not as an armchair theorist, but as the political opponent of the scientific apologists of capitalism. A convinced

socialist and enemy of private ownership, he mustered all his arguments to refute what the bourgeois economists preached about the "beneficial nature" and "eternity" of capitalism. He proved convincingly that private ownership must inevitably give way to the collective ownership of the means of production. Thus, the highest stage, coinciding in form with the initial stage, i.e., the stage of primitive common ownership, is, as it were, a reversion to the latter, but on a new basis. Chernyshevsky regarded this as a manifestation of the universally predominating dialectical law of the negation of the negation.

He was profoundly convinced that capitalism must give way to socialism and that the transition to socialism could be made without passing through capitalism. And he regarded Russia as a country in which such a transition could be made with the aid of the still existing peasant communities. It must be stated that Chernyshevsky's arguments on this score are abstract and contradict the very principle of concrete thinking that he himself advanced. It is beyond dispute, however, that here too he tried to keep to the dialectical method; he was convinced that the application of dialectics to the history of society armed us with the consciousness that the fall of tsarism and the triumph of socialism were necessary and inevitable.

Chernyshevsky's assertion that it was possible for Russia to pass on to socialism through the peasant communities without going through capitalism was utterly utopian, although, in itself, the presentation of the question of non-capitalist development was extremely interesting. Thus, Chernyshevsky's socialism, to be brought about by a peasant revolution, was utopian socialism, and the dialectical method that served as the theoretical basis of this peasant revolution and utopian socialism was still abstract and limited. The combination of scientific socialism with materialist dialectics could be brought about only in Marxism, only on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat, which is conscious of its world-historical role of builder of the new society.

Chernyshevsky did not create an integral doctrine of dialectics. We find in his works a profound understanding and application of a number of the elements of dialectics, but these do not yet form a harmonious and systematic theory of dialectics; his anthropological principle was a grave hindrance to this. Chernyshevsky is on firm ground when he speaks of the unity of man, of the universe, of the laws of nature, and of the possibility of our knowing the world through our sense organs. But he is on much weaker ground when he tries to perceive in this unity a multiplic-

ity of quality, the specific nature of every phenomenon, form of transition, and the specific nature of cognition. Basing himself on the practice of the revolutionary peasantry in Russia, he went further than any other thinker of the pre-Marx period; he represents the peak of pre-Marx materialist philosophy. Leninism—the most revolutionary doctrine in modern times—absorbed the progressive traditions of the Russian revolutionary democrats, of whom Chernyshevsky was the greatest representative.

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The field in which Chernyshevsky engaged in his first battle with idealism was aesthetics. It was in this field that the outstanding Russian materialist and revolutionary democrat received his baptism of fire.

His interest in aesthetics was not fortuitous. Progressive Russian art, and primarily our great Russian literature—the literature of Pushkin, Griboyedov, Lermontov, Gogol and others—played an immense role in developing progressive public opinion. Aesthetics had long been in Russia the arena of a fierce struggle between diverse social forces, a field of battle for influence in the intellectual and social life of the country. Continuing the line pursued by the revolutionary democrat Belinsky, Chernyshevsky strove to place art

entirely at the service of the great struggle for emancipation.

The chief obstacle to this was the idealist aesthetics that predominated in the West at that time, and which, after Belinsky's death, had raised its head again in Russia and tried to divert art from the path of realism by championing so-called "pure art." The class significance of the "pure art" theory lay in that it tried to divert public opinion from the burning questions of the day to the world of "lofty emotions," remote from the reality of serfdom, from the struggle against serfdom. That is why the exposure of this theory was not only of enormous theoretical, but also of urgent practical political importance.

As is known, idealist aesthetics obtained its chief arguments from the arsenal of German philosophy. Hence, by striking at Hegel and his school, Chernyshevsky also struck at the Russian idealists in the camp of the nobility and the liberals.

Chernyshevsky was profoundly convinced that aesthetics is determined by the general world outlook, that it is a part of the world outlook. He said that the character of the general scientific conceptions with which aesthetics had to be brought into line was determined by "respect for real life, distrust of a priori hypotheses, even though they tickle one's fancy...." In his opinion,

objectless flights of fancy are harmful not only "in scientific matters," but "even in the field of art," which must also take its stand on firm, realistic ground. In his dissertation, "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality," he set out to bring the problems of aesthetics in line with his materialist philosophy. Under the conditions prevailing in Russia in his time, when idealism predominated in the theories of aesthetics, the elaboration of the general principles of aesthetics was, perhaps, more important and urgent than the investigation of any other problem. It was necessary to strike at the foundations of the idealist theories of aesthetics and thus bring down the whole edifice; for Chernyshevsky this task was also a process of building the edifice of a new materialist theory of art. Therefore, those who asserted that his aim was to destroy all aesthetics were utterly wrong. While combating the old, idealist aesthetics, he continuously championed materialist aesthetics, scientific and effective aesthetics that fully corresponded to the interests of revolutionary democracy.

Chernyshevsky deemed his first task to be to employ the principles of materialist philosophy for the purpose of finding a realistic solution for the problem of the relation of art to reality.

The prevailing theory of art approached this problem from the standpoint of idealist philoso-

phy. According to this theory, there was no true beauty in nature or in the real life of man; beauty is created by our imagination, by art. Art springs from man's desire to make up for the absence of beauty in objective reality. Chernyshevsky proved that this point of view of idealism was unsound.

Naturally, to solve the problem of the relation of art to reality, the materialist Chernyshevsky had to approach the subject from a standpoint that is the very opposite of idealist aesthetics. He took reality as the starting point of the theory of art in general, and of the theory of beauty in particular. "Beauty is life"—such was the basic formula he advanced for his theory of aesthetics. "Beautiful is that being in which we see life as it should be according to our conceptions; beautiful is the object which expresses life, or reminds us of life."

Further, he established that the different classes of society have different conceptions of life. For example, the peasant's conception of life always includes the concept of work, a good house, plenty of food, and so forth. A fresh complexion, rosy cheeks and a buxom figure expressing sound health, are the signs of beauty according to the conceptions of the common people. The ruling classes who do not perform physical work and lead an idle life have different concep-

tions of beauty. In their eyes a pale face, frail figure, etc., which express a definite mode of life, acquire the virtue of beauty. Thus, Chernyshevsky made a brilliant sociological analysis of the conception of beauty. He reached a conception of the economic and class basis of aesthetic norms. In the sphere of aesthetics, as in the sphere of philosophy, Chernyshevsky also came near to Marxism.

Demolishing all the arguments of the idealist aestheticists, Chernyshevsky arrived at his chief materialist conclusion, namely, that reality is higher than art, that art is a reflection of reality, that art is not as vivid or as complete as the objects, phenomena and events of real life it depicts. He strongly emphasized that, in relation to works of art, material reality is primary. He advanced the idea that material reality is primary in "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality," long before he wrote "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," but both these works equally reveal his uncompromising hostility to the principles of idealism in all its forms and manifestations, and the ardent struggle he waged against it. The revolutionary-democratic movement in Russian society needed an effective philosophical, ethical and aesthetic theory, and for his time it was created by the great leader of that movement, Chernyshevsky.

Idealist aesthetics limited the sphere of art to the beautiful. Chernyshevsky emphatically opposed this. He said that the sphere of art is wider than the sphere of the beautiful. The subject of art is nature, life, but, he explained, "by real life we, of course, mean not only man's relation to the objects and beings of the objective world, but also his inner life. Sometimes a man lives in a dream—in that case the dream has for him (to a certain degree and for a certain time) the significance of something objective. Still more often a man lives in the world of his emotions; these states, if they become interesting, are also reproduced by art." Art, like science, takes for its subject everything that can interest man. The difference between them is that science speaks with the aid of logical conceptions, of reasoning, whereas art speaks with the aid of artistic images. Following Belinsky, Chernyshevsky developed the view that the role of art, like that of science, is to help man to know the world.

While arguing that art is the reproduction of reality in artistic images, Chernyshevsky did not in the least imply that this can be achieved merely by copying. In his opinion, artistic creation is a process that calls for a vivid imagination, a penetrating mind and fine taste. He regarded the qualities of a writer as good when he combines "talent with thought, which gives strength and

meaning to his talent, which gives life and beauty to its productions." Chernyshevsky was an ardent champion of lofty ideology in art and literature, which, he urged, can be achieved when the writer is in the front ranks of society, when he not only reflects but also explains reality in his works, and pronounces his judgment on it; when he acts as a herald of the progressive ideas of his time.

Plekhanov strongly objected to Chernyshevsky's demand that art must be active. He was convinced that to put demands to art from the standpoint of what it ought to be means transcending the borders of scientific analysis. Art and literature must be taken as they are, he said, and we must be content with explaining their meaning. This point of view clearly expresses Plekhanov's Menshevism.

Notwithstanding the flaws in it due to the anthropological principle in philosophy, Chernyshevsky's aesthetics, like Belinsky's, is very close to ours. As Comrade Zhdanov said: "Militant art, which fights for the finest ideals of the people—that is how the great representatives of Russian literature pictured art and literature to themselves. Chernyshevsky, who of all the utopian socialists came nearest to scientific socialism, and whose works, as Lenin said, 'breathed the spirit of the class struggle,' taught that, in addition to

helping us to know life, the purpose of art is to teach the people how to correctly appraise social phenomena."*

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In attacking the foundations of the serf system, Chernyshevsky waged a consistent struggle on all fronts, and, consequently, in the field of ethics. In opposition to the prevailing ethics of the oppressors, he advanced his own doctrine, which, in complete harmony with his general philosophical conceptions, had in view man, his natural requirements, his happiness. This was his celebrated theory of rational egoism, which was a form of expression of his revolutionary-democratic ethics.

Chernyshevsky was of the opinion that a man who is prompted in his actions not by abstract ideas that are alien to him, but by his own interests is an egoist. Here, the egoist is contrasted to the individual whose human dignity is suppressed, a passive, submissive, obedient individual. "Egoism," properly understood, is only complete freedom of the individual, said Pisarev. On the lips of the radical thinkers of the sixties of the last century who lived under the conditions of stern regimentation of social and individual life, this term

* A. A. Zhdanov's *Address on the Magazines "Zvezda" and "Leningrad,"* Gospolitizdat, Moscow 1946, p. 24.

did, indeed, possess a profound liberating meaning.

Chernyshevsky sharply opposed his ethics not only to religious-feudal ethics, which doped the people with all sorts of fables about a life hereafter, but also to the bourgeois-philistine ethics of crude, narrow self-interest. His ethics does not divorce individual interest from public interest, but strives to combine them in a rational way. Moreover, the ethics of rational egoism demands that the individual should become conscious of the common good. This is characteristic of the chief personages in Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is To Be Done?* Imbued with great love for the toilers, they, like Chernyshevsky, feel burning hatred for those classes and individuals who subject the masses of the people to cruel exploitation, privation and degradation, for those who encroach upon the happiness of the majority. In this novel Chernyshevsky depicts the positive ideal of a man of moral strength and integrity who is capable, at the risk of his life, of fighting against serfdom and for the happiness of the people. The aim of Chernyshevsky's ethics was to train devoted revolutionists, to arm the fighters in the peasant revolution. The generation of proletarian revolutionists, in their battles against the tsarist autocracy and the bourgeoisie, retained and further developed the fine ethical precepts preached by Chernyshevsky.

Chernyshevsky repudiated free will and held that all our actions are, at bottom, prompted by the desire to satisfy human requirements and to achieve happiness. But if that is the case, why are some of our actions regarded as ethical and some not? Chernyshevsky says that it is not because they are in themselves bad or good; they become one or the other owing to the conditions of life. The organization of society is to blame for the fact that private and public interests do not harmonize, and that a man who strives for his own happiness comes into conflict with the interests of other people. Create normal conditions of life for man, remove the circumstances that degrade and corrupt him, and then, not only a broad and enlightened mind, but also noble moral qualities will become qualities that can be acquired by all. They will be the inalienable qualities of man living under conditions favourable for the development of his powers and capabilities. Although prompted by the desire to satisfy their individual requirements, people's actions will, at the same time, be altruistic. Thus, in his ethics also, Chernyshevsky arrives at the necessity of a revolution and of the reorganization of society on socialist lines.

In Chernyshevsky's opinion, the firm basis of human action is rational motive. Truth and good are the same thing, he said. But there are different

kinds of reason, and there are different conceptions of what is rational; what, then, is the basis of common morality? The reason of "man in general." "Science recognizes as truth only that which constitutes human nature; only that which is useful to man in general is regarded as true good; all digressions from this norm in the conceptions of a given nation, or class, are a mistake. . . ." This statement shows that although it contained a number of profound ideas concerning the difference in the character of "good" and "evil" in different epochs, and among different nations, Chernyshevsky's ethics as a whole was based on anthropology and therefore suffered from abstractness.

Plekhanov sharply attacked Chernyshevsky for attributing in his ethics too big a role to motive, to consciousness; but while pointing to the idealist aspects of Chernyshevsky's views on ethics, he himself fell into the opposite error of underrating the role of consciousness, the role of the subjective factor in history. This was due to his Menshevik errors. In developing the theory of historical materialism, Lenin and Stalin always emphasized the accelerating, organizing and transformatory role of revolutionary ideas, parties and classes. On this question Chernyshevsky stands near to us. In attacking the foundations of serfdom he strove to create an effective morality, and em-

phasized the active, creative, revolutionary role played by people. But in the period in which he lived he could not rise to a genuinely scientific conception of the social activities and, therefore, of the ethics of the people.

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The decisive factor in Chernyshevsky's great and many-sided life was his boundless love for the Russian people, his constant readiness to fight for the happiness of his country. Patriotism was the guiding idea of all his sentiments and moods. Lenin wrote that Chernyshevsky was filled "with genuine love for his country. . . ."*

Chernyshevsky wrote: ". . . The historical importance of every great Russian is measured by the services he rendered his country, and his human dignity is measured by the strength of his patriotism."** Having Belinsky in mind, he wrote: "Numerous are the merits of the critics of the Gogol period, but they all acquired life, meaning and strength from the passion that inspired them—ardent patriotism."

Chernyshevsky waged a fierce struggle against the bourgeois cosmopolites Babst, Chicherin,

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* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Moscow 1952, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 409.

** N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., 1906, Vol. II, p. 121.

Katkov and others. He said that among the Russian people "the sense of national pride is more strongly developed than among any other civilized nation." He was fully convinced that Russia had a great future before her. "We are ensured for many centuries ahead of the happy lot of improving ourselves and of arranging our lives ever better and better." At the same time, however, he fought against nationalism; he stood for the solidarity of the toilers of all nationalities.

Chernyshevsky's love for his country was organically linked with his revolutionary democratism. In his opinion, to be a patriot meant fighting with all one's might those who were enslaving the people, those who were preventing Russia from becoming strong and happy. When still a young man he mused: "To work not for the transient but for the eternal glory of one's country and for the good of mankind—what can be loftier and more desirable than this?"

All Chernyshevsky's subsequent life was one of honest and devoted service to his country. By his activities as a revolutionist and thinker he added to the glory of Russia and left deep traces on her social and intellectual life. He played a very big part in the spiritual development of Dobrolyubov, Antonovich, Pisarev, Shelgunov, Serno-Solovyevich and of many other distinguished figures in the Russian revolutionary-

democratic movement. The finest men of many other nations: Shevchenko and Franko in the Ukraine; Nikoladze and Chavchavadze in Georgia; Nalbandyan in Armenia; Akhundov in Azerbaijan; Svetozar Markovich in Serbia; Karavelov and Botev in Bulgaria, and many others, were under Chernyshevsky's benign influence. His influence on Russian literature and art was great and fruitful. In Russian natural science his ideas were brilliantly confirmed by the work of the outstanding physiologist Sechenov, whose *Reflexes of the Brain,* published in 1863, marked a real triumph for materialism.

The literary work of N. G. Chernyshevsky was extraordinarily diverse. Brilliant philosopher, political economist, sociologist, historian, literary critic, philologist, novelist, journalist and organizer of revolutionary democracy—such is the by no means complete list of his encyclopedic learning and fields of activity. His activities covered all the branches of learning in his time.

In the diary he kept when he was a student Chernyshevsky wrote: "... I will not hesitate to sacrifice my life for the triumph of my convictions..." and indeed, the interests of his country were always more important to him than everything else; nothing could shake his determination in the struggle for the interests of the people.

Chernyshevsky warned that nothing can be

more fatal for the revolutionary cause than irresolution in the struggle against enemies. The genuine revolutionist must know that the interests of the opposing sides are irreconcilable, that it is a life and death struggle, that if you do not destroy the enemy, he will destroy you. Therefore, the supreme law in the revolutionary struggle is: rout the enemy. Honest service to one's country and the revolution entails privation and sacrifice. And by his works Chernyshevsky constantly trained people who were not daunted by difficulties, who went boldly out to meet them, and fought to overcome them. He declared that the revolutionist and ardent patriot is a man of special mould, strong, energetic, devoted to his people and to his country.

Chernyshevsky had deep faith in the Russian people's bright socialist future, and he therefore issued the call: "Love it, strive for it, work for it, bring it nearer, carry as much as you can of it into the present."

Chernyshevsky, and the revolutionary commoners he headed, regarded it as their historic mission to bring socialist society nearer by means of their revolutionary activities. They regarded it as a great honour to be destined, as they believed, to carry out this difficult, but glorious and noble task. But socialism could, and did, triumph in Russia only as proletarian socialism, based on

the great teachings of Marxism-Leninism. The Great October Socialist Revolution was triumphant because its victory was organized by the Communist Party.

The great merit of Chernyshevsky, the forerunner of Russian Social-Democracy, lay in that he was one of the geniuses who, as he himself expressed it, "running ahead of their epoch, enjoyed the glory of foreseeing the dawn of the coming day and had the courage to welcome it."

Russia succeeded in throwing off the long-borne yoke of tsarism, landlordism and capitalism, in abolishing exploitation and in building socialism, and she is now boldly and confidently proceeding towards communism. Russia has become the most advanced country in the world and is pointing out the road for other nations. The Soviet people is rightly proud of Chernyshevsky, an outstanding representative of Russian revolutionary thought. N. G. Chernyshevsky, a fearless revolutionary, brilliant scientist and writer, has won the deepest gratitude and respect of all advanced and progressive mankind.